



[Gaius Gracchus, 154 BC – 121 BC](#)

## Roots of the NDR

With any course, one must decide where to begin. In the case of the National Democratic Revolution (NDR), the course has to begin with an understanding of class struggle and of class alliances in history.

Such a study could begin as long ago as the fifth century BC in the Athenian Republic led by [Pericles](#), or with the [Conflict of the Orders](#) in the [Roman Republic](#) at approximately the same time, and it could proceed through the class struggles involving, for example, the Gracchus brothers [Pictured: Gaius Gracchus, Tribune of the People], Julius Caesar and others, that led in 27 BC to the stagnant class truce called the [Roman Empire](#), which then, during four centuries, declined and fell (in its Western half) into a rural Dark Age, which was also the genesis of feudalism. Class struggle is the engine of history. Without it, there is very little movement.

We could alternatively begin in 1512 with [Machiavelli](#), and

the class struggles of Renaissance (i.e. “born again”) Italy, where multiple city-states with populations of 100,000 or more were embroiled in internal and external class conflicts.

We could go to [Thomas Hobbes](#), who published his book [Leviathan](#) in 1651, describing the politics of the bigger national states of Northern Europe (Like Britain, France, Spain and the Netherlands) which had by his time surpassed the politics of Italy to become the main theatre of recorded historical process.

These European machinations could have been our workbook and our political sandpit, for the main reason that there is a record of them. There is very little virtue to be found in this history, and the examples are mostly bad examples – examples of things to be avoided – but there is a literature.

## **French Revolution**

But we might as well rather begin, as Frederick Engels does in the first part of his “[Socialism, Utopian and Scientific](#)” (**attached**), with the [Great French Revolution](#) that started in 1789. From this point on we can meet, in their developed form, the class protagonists who allied and clashed, from that time until now, in all possible permutations; alliances holy and unholy, strategic and tactical; marriages of convenience and marriages made in heaven; and we can have, for the most part, the benefit of Marx and Engels as eyewitnesses or near-to eyewitnesses.

The contending classes were: the feudal aristocrats; the peasants; the bourgeoisie; and the proletariat.

Using this work of Engels' as a starting point has the additional benefit of introducing the rudiments of political philosophy, and leading our thoughts towards the "democratic bourgeois republic", which is at one and the same time the highest form of political life before socialism; the prerequisite of concerted proletarian action; and a form of the State that has to be transcended.

In other words, our study of the NDR will bring us, as history has already brought us in life, to the kind of crisis that Lenin outlined so sharply in "[The State and Revolution](#)," when majority rule is no longer an adequate substitute for the free development of each as the condition for the free development of all, social self-management, the end of class struggle, the withering away of the state, and the fully classless society called communism.

- The above is to introduce the original reading-text: [Socialism, Utopian and Scientific, Part 1, Engels](#).
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